

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 26, 2011

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 6, 2011

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2011–12 REGULAR SESSION

## ASSEMBLY BILL

**No. 739**

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**Introduced by Assembly Members Bonnie Lowenthal, Ammiano,  
and Brownley**  
*(Coauthor: Assembly Member Williams)*

February 17, 2011

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An act to add Section 51223.5 to the Education Code, relating to pupil instruction.

### LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 739, as amended, Bonnie Lowenthal. Pupil instruction: suicide prevention: mental illness awareness.

Existing law establishes an adopted course of study for grades 7 to 12, inclusive. Existing law establishes the Curriculum Development and Supplemental Materials Commission and requires the commission to recommend to the State Board of Education the adoption of minimum standards for courses of study in preschool, kindergarten, elementary, and secondary schools.

This bill would require the state board and the commission to include suicide prevention instruction and mental illness awareness instruction in the health education framework for pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive, during the next revision of that framework. *The bill would also require the state board and the commission to include suicide prevention instruction and mental health illness awareness instruction in the health education evaluation criteria for pupils in grades 7 and 8 during that revision. The bill would authorize a school district, commencing with*

*the 2012–13 school year, to provide suicide prevention instruction and mental illness awareness instruction to pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive.*

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

- 1     SECTION 1. Section 51223.5 is added to the Education Code,  
2 to read:  
3     51223.5. (a) During the next revision of the health education  
4 framework, the state board and the Curriculum Development and  
5 Supplemental Materials Commission shall include suicide  
6 prevention instruction and mental illness awareness instruction in  
7 that framework for pupils in grades 7 to 12, inclusive. *In the course*  
8 *of that revision, the Curriculum Development and Supplemental*  
9 *Materials Commission and the state board shall include suicide*  
10 *prevention instruction and mental illness awareness instruction*  
11 *in the evaluation criteria for grades 7 and 8.*  
12     (b) *Commencing with the 2012–13 school year, a school district*  
13 *may provide to pupils in any of grades 7 to 12, inclusive, suicide*  
14 *prevention instruction and mental illness awareness instruction.*  
15     ~~(b)~~  
16     (c) As used in this section, “suicide prevention instruction”  
17 includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:  
18     (1) Awareness and knowledge of depression, depression  
19 symptoms, self-destructive behaviors, and risk factors and warning  
20 signs of suicide.  
21     (2) Ability to identify school and community resources for  
22 suicide prevention.  
23     (3) Knowledge and skills about how to seek help for oneself or  
24 a friend and how to overcome barriers to seeking help.  
25     (4) Importance of witnesses and bystanders reporting actual or  
26 perceived signs of suicide risk factors or behaviors to teachers,  
27 counselors, administrators, or other school staff.  
28     ~~(e)~~  
29     (d) As used in this section, “mental illness awareness  
30 instruction” includes, but is not limited to, all of the following:  
31     (1) Awareness and knowledge of mental illnesses and disorders,  
32 including, but not limited to, depression, schizophrenia, bipolar

- 1 disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and autism spectrum
- 2 disorders.
- 3 (2) Ability to identify school and community resources for
- 4 individuals living with a mental illness or disorder.
- 5 (3) Knowledge and skills about how to seek help for oneself or
- 6 a friend and how to overcome barriers to seeking help.

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